

PREFACE

A “long” time ago—back in the mid 1970s—when I was introduced to the delights of symplectic geometry, one could almost count the number of practicing symplecticians on one’s fingers. Now, a mere generation later, a search on MathSciNet yielded over 2,100 hits on the keyword “symplectic” for just the first five months of 1998! The field has exploded: areas such as symplectic topology, which didn’t exist in 1976, and Poisson geometry, which was in its infancy then, have emerged as subjects of intense interest to mathematicians and physicists alike.

The ever broadening scope and burgeoning applications of symplectic geometry provide ample justification for a special issue of *Differential Geometry and Its Applications* devoted to this field. In consultation with the Editor-in-Chief, I invited several leading researchers to contribute up-to-date surveys as well as extended original research articles on representative topics. Of course, in a single volume it is not possible to present more than a cursory overview, but we hope that it will provide nonspecialists a thorough introduction to current topics of interest and researchers new directions to explore.

I wish to thank the contributors, who gladly lent their time, energy and expertise to this enterprise, and whose cooperation at every turn made my job easy. Thanks are also due to the Editor-in-Chief Demeter Krupka, the DGA staff Olga Krupková and Michal Marvan, as well as the referees for their encouragement and very able assistance.

Mark J. Gotay
Maunawili, Hawai‘i
May 30, 1998